

Procurement Plan for Bexley

Procurement Summary

1. Family Services

We intend to invite tenders for **670** New Matter Starts (NMS) for the provision of face-to-face Family advice within the procurement area (PA) of Bexley.

There is currently access to Family services across the PA and we anticipate that this will continue to be the case. Significant demand for public law services is evident in this PA and we consider that as these clients may require advice across a wide range of family issues. We will advertise the tender as **Service Specification A** although in recognition of Bexley having one of the smallest populations eligible for legal aid in London we have set the minimum NMS size at **50**.

- Providers will be required to deliver the full range of private family work **and** public law children work.
- Providers will need to have a permanent presence in the PA.
- Providers will be required to tender for and undertake a minimum of **50** Legal Help cases per year and 5 public law certificated cases per year.

Providers who wish to undertake only work for children will be able to tender for a specialist children contract with no requirement to undertake the full range of family services.

2. Family & Housing (Combined Service)

We will set aside a small proportion of the available NMS in Housing for providers wishing to deliver a combined Housing and Family service.

We have seen limited demand for this service within the procurement area. We will therefore make **100** NMS in Housing available for providers wishing to deliver a combined Housing and Family service.

Providers wishing to bid for this service combination will be required to tender for and undertake a minimum of **50** NMS in Housing per schedule year.

3. Social Welfare Law Services

We intend to invite tenders for **700** NMS across the core SWL categories of Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits advice, **100** in Community Care and **100** in Employment.

As mentioned above in section 1, eligibility for legal aid is not high in this PA and SWL services have historically been provided in low volumes. To ensure continued client access to the full range of services in SWL we will invite tenders under **Service Specification A** but in recognition of the low volumes of work we have set the minimum NMS tender size at **50** for Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits.

Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits will be tendered together as a bundle of services and providers will be required to tender for and provide services in all three categories.

- Providers may bid to deliver Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits either as a single legal entity or as part of a consortium.
- Providers delivering Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits will need to have a permanent presence in the PA.
- Providers delivering Housing, Debt and Welfare Benefits will be required to undertake a minimum of **50** NMS in each category per schedule year.
- Providers delivering Community Care will be required to undertake a minimum of **20** NMS per schedule year.
- Providers delivering Employment will be required to undertake a minimum of **30** NMS per schedule year.
- Community Care and Employment providers will be required to have a part-time presence in the PA.
- As tenders are invited under **Service Specification A**, we will require providers to employ an authorised litigator in order to conduct Housing and / or Community Care services.

For Debt, Housing and Welfare Benefits, we will divide the available NMS for the PA between the three categories as follows:

PA	Debt	Housing	Welfare Benefits
Bexley	160	200	340

4. Access

There are no potential access issues within Bexley as the area is geographically small and good public transport links are available across the PA. Therefore no criteria will be used to select providers on the basis of their location within the area and providers will only be required to have a permanent presence within the PA.

5. Budget

Current spend in this area is lower than that which we would expect to spend in Family Legal Help according to the Indicative Spend Budget Model.

Therefore, the total number of NMS available in this area will be increased to enable an increase in access to services which moves closer to that suggested by the Model.

Current spend in this area is lower than that which we would expect to spend in SWL Legal Help according to the Indicative Spend Budget Model. Therefore, the total number of NMS available in this area will be increased to enable an increase in access to services which moves closer to that suggested by the Model.

6. Current Supply: September 08 – August 09

Category	No. of Providers	NMS opened	Certificates issued
Family (public)	5	605	202
Family (private)	5		192
Debt	0	4	0
Housing	2	269	17
Welfare Benefits	1	382	0
Employment	1	112	0
Community Care	0	1	0

	Total providers	Current SWL Services						Current Family Services	
		5 core SWL cats	4 core SWL cats	3 core SWL cats	2 core SWL cats	1 core SWL cat	Housing & Family	5+Public law certs	Family private only
Solicitor	5	0	0	0	0	1	1	5	0
NFP	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0